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Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower
Developments in Indochina*

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**Recent Communist Logistical
and Manpower Developments
in Indochina**

Major Communist logistical activity continues in northern South Vietnam and the adjacent Laos border area. Concurrently, however, there are indications that the North Vietnamese combat force structure in Military Region 1 is being drawn down.

- The 312th NVA Division almost certainly has now withdrawn or is in the process of withdrawing from South Vietnam's Military Region 1 into North Vietnam.
- A small flow of civilian and military specialists continues in the infiltration pipeline.

In southern South Vietnam logistical activity also continues at a fast pace. Significant unit relocations there have resulted in an increased concentration of Communist forces in the northern Delta/Cambodia border region.

In areas contiguous to South Vietnam:

- A heavy resupply effort is continuing in the Dong Hoi area of North Vietnam.
- Supplies continue to move into Laos and sightings of large numbers of vehicles within southern Laos confirm their movement toward forward areas in both northern and southern South Vietnam.
- Heavy resupply activity through Cambodia continues. Two NVA antiaircraft artillery regiments have recently deployed to Cambodia.

Note: Comments and queries regarding this publication are welcomed. They may be directed to [redacted] the Office of Economic Research, [redacted]

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DISCUSSION

Recent Communist Logistical Developments

North Vietnam

1. The first detected seaborne deliveries of helicopters to North Vietnam are now taking place. The Soviet ship **Baymak**, which is being offloaded at Cac Ba, was reported carrying three MI-10 helicopters, and the **Pavlovsk**, another Soviet ship now at Haiphong, is carrying three more MI-10s. These helicopters can carry about 10 tons each and are especially suited for construction work, but they can also be used by the military.

2. Recent aerial photography over the North Vietnam Panhandle has shown significant reconstruction and high levels of activity on the rail line there. It is not possible to determine from the photography the types of cargo being moved. The North Vietnam Panhandle is a rice-deficit area, and some of the goods almost certainly consist of foodstuffs and other non-military products. At Thanh Hoa, an important transshipment point to the south, the pace of activity noted was high, and many new facilities have been added to improve rail shipment capabilities. South of Thanh Hoa, although the line was only partly observed, it appears operational.

3. Detected logistical activity in the Vinh area continues to be largely associated with supply deliveries to northern Laos. On 20 April, for example, vehicles were noted delivering rice and petroleum -- about 50 tons of each -- to the major NVA logistical authority in the northern Laos region. An intercept of 13 April indicated that some 900 tons of rice were to be delivered there from Cho Si during an unspecified time period.

4. Farther south, in Binh Tram 26's area around Dong Hoi, heavy vehicle movements continue. During 15-17 April, over 275 vehicles transited a vehicle checkpoint (in both directions) of Binh Tram 26 and on 18 April it was reported that over 450 tons of supplies -- almost half of canned meat -- were delivered during an unspecified time period. On 18 April, an element of the binh tram reported that it had over 580 tons of rice and other undisclosed cargo in storage.

5. It also appears that Binh Tram 26 will sustain a substantial level of logistic activity on the waterways in the southern North Vietnam Panhandle, most notably the Giang River. According to a series of recently intercepted messages, binh tram workers were advised that the new standards for handling cargo would require the loading and unloading of five barges each day. The type of barges in use at Binh Tram 26 can probably

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accommodate 15 to 25 tons. The current transportation effort appears scheduled to continue well into May. On 17 April, a new transportation campaign was announced by Binh Tram 26, to last through 19 May.

6. There have been some indications that vehicles are being moved northward from GVN MR 1, possibly to assist in the current high levels of logistic activity taking place in the southern North Vietnam Panhandle. On 18 April, Binh Tram 42 reported that 44 vehicles had been dispatched, while an additional complement, including some tankers, was awaiting dispatch to North Vietnam. Some of the vehicles being sent north are to pick up more "military cargo" to be brought back to the Group 473 area. Others, however -- in numbers unknown -- are apparently to remain at Dong Hoi, in southern North Vietnam. The intercept revealed that the Commander of MR 559 had specifically prohibited all types of vehicles from proceeding to Hanoi when they were especially needed at Dong Hoi. Both Binh Trams 27 and 42 are dispatching vehicles to the Dong Hoi area. The impact of these developments on future logistical activity in the Laos/South Vietnam area remains unclear. However, it is important to remember that the rainy season on the Laotian side of the border is near and the pace of logistical activity there is expected to subside in the relatively near future.

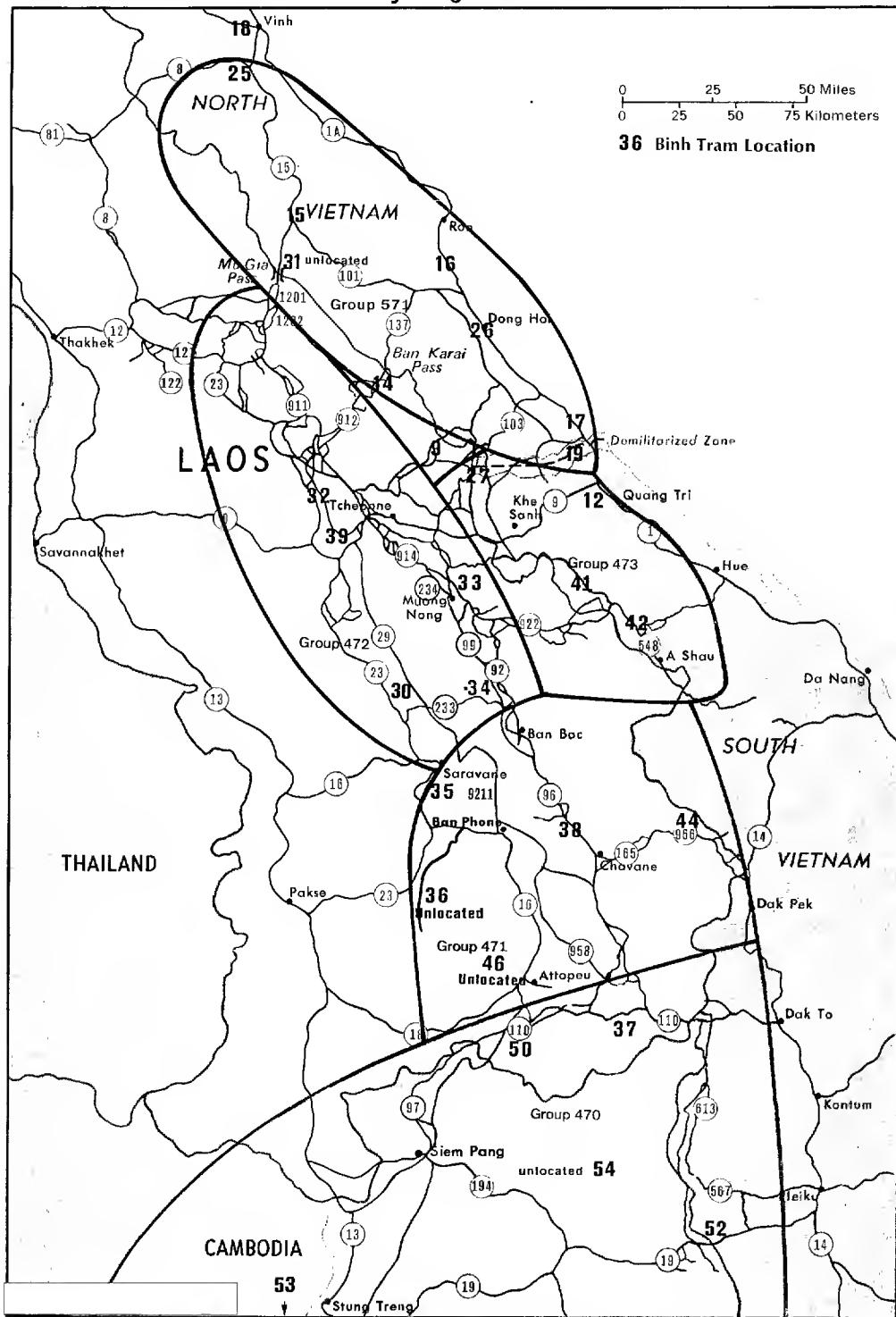
Laos and Cambodia

7. The number of detections of vehicles moving into Laos declined somewhat during the past week but the rate continued relatively high. Most of the activity was detected on Routes 912 (at Ban Karai Pass) and 1033 (west of the DMZ). On the latter route, 90 southbound vehicles were detected on 17-18 April -- by far the heaviest two-day total detected in this area this dry season. Within the Panhandle, roads remain in good condition, and photography continues to reveal hundreds of vehicles operating along the major lines of communication.

8. COMINT also revealed significant numbers of vehicles on their way to various locations in the central Panhandle. On 13 April an element of Group 472 reported that it had received 42 vehicles. Binh Tram 42, which operates in the Route 922/A Shau Valley area has also been busy: on 14 April an element reported that it had handled 43 vehicles, probably on that date. The same day 95 vehicles -- some carrying ordnance and communications equipment -- were reported going to the B-4 Front in eastern GVN MR 1.

9. Recent low-level aerial photography revealed that the Communists are continuing to expand their petroleum pipeline in Laos. The photography revealed a 3-mile segment of pipeline generally paralleling Route 966, one of the exit routes from Laos into South Vietnam. Some of the pipeline

Binh Tram Locations in Military Region 559



Note: The North Vietnamese logistical network in MR 559 is currently undergoing a major reorganization. This map does not reflect such changes, and is intended only as a reference to the various binh trams' areas of operation prior to the recent changes. New maps will be prepared when our information on the organization warrants.

is buried, but other sections are in an open trench indicating recent construction. The existence of a pumphouse and a probable refueling station along the line near the South Vietnam border suggests that it is operational.

10. COMINT from the southern Laos Panhandle/northeast Cambodia area has revealed a sustained high level of resupply there. An 18 April intercept from Group 470 stated that one transportation battalion had dispatched 73 vehicles recently and that 80 to 90 vehicles of a second battalion were scheduled to depart. The latter group would not be able to go immediately, however, because it would be tied up transporting wounded troops for two to three days.

11. Communist supply lines -- both road and waterway -- through eastern Cambodia showed signs of continued heavy use this week. Allied air strikes against traffic control points and moving targets are causing considerable destruction of facilities, supplies, and transport equipment, but rapid repairs are keeping large volumes of supplies moving. Most major roads and transshipment points are described as crowded with supplies.

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12. [redacted] North Vietnamese military activities along the southern Cambodia border provides a perspective on logistic traffic flows moving through this area into GVN MRs 3 and 4. Currently the North Vietnamese are employing at least two motorable routes to move weapons, ammunition, armor, food, and other goods from the Mimot and Krek areas of Cambodia into Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces. The Communist legal entry route through Xa Mat, not yet manned by ICCS personnel, is reportedly carrying all types of military-related traffic, from armored columns to truck and oxcart resupply convoys. Reporting on the newly built cross-border road leading south from Mimot suggests that this artery is carrying mainly arms and ammunition.

13. Ordnance shipments from Cambodian base areas into GVN MR 4 apparently still depend largely on watercraft and native overland transport.

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[redacted] five oxcarts containing arms and ammunition from Tani in eastern Kampot Province into Chau Doc Province, South Vietnam. [redacted]

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[redacted] convoy was followed a half hour later by another five loaded oxcarts. Carried aboard the carts were AK-7 ammunition, submachineguns, and B-40, 122-mm, and SA-7 rockets. Significantly, the Communists captured the seacoast town of Kep in Cambodia on 16 April. The Kep area has long been reported to be a key Communist storage area and jumping off point for boats infiltrating supplies to the U Minh Forest and other zones controlled by the VC/NVA. Communist control of the town of Kep would facilitate such activity.

South Vietnam

14. Very large stockpiles of weapons and ammunition continue to be noted in northern South Vietnam and in the nearby Laos border area, and there are signs that the Communists continue to replenish these. Because much of the recently available information is reporting from Group 473, whose responsibilities include both MR 1 and the border area, it is impossible to pinpoint the location of much of the activity. One storage area, located within the Group 473 area, reported on 22 April that it had 2,640 tons of supplies -- mostly ordnance -- on hand as of the date; this total represents an increase of 550 tons in storage at this one area since 15 April. A second storage area reported having 660 tons of supplies on hand. These large tonnages may be in addition to the 6,000 tons of cargo reported stored in northern South Vietnam in last week's memorandum. These large storage areas are believed to be spread out between Quang Tri and the A Shau Valley.

15. Food and petroleum resupply also looms large in Communist logistical activities in MR 1. On 17 April a report from Group 473 stated that 354 vehicles had been received at a vehicle checkpoint south of Khe Sanh between 1 and 11 April. Apparently the vehicles had transported mostly food and petroleum.

16. North Vietnam continues to strengthen its foothold in northern MR 1 by the construction of permanent facilities to ease its logistics chores. For example, recent photography revealed that a new pipeline-served petroleum storage area has been established on Route 9, about 3 miles east of Cam Lo. The storage facility appears capable of holding more than 400 tons of petroleum products. The pipeline was extended an additional 2 miles south to serve the new facility. In other activity, continued construction on the new runway at Khe Sanh was observed on 16 April, and a 200-man North Vietnamese engineering unit equipped with bulldozers, cranes, trucks, and crew-served weapons has reportedly been sent to Dong Ha to reconstruct the airfield there. Other reporting indicates that repair work on the Dong Ha airfield is now in progress. Elsewhere in northern MR 1 [redacted] since 24 March the Communists have developed a new 35-mile long "secret" route to channel troops and supplies from the A Shau Valley -- where heavy logistical activity continues to be observed -- into the coastal lowlands south of Hue.

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17. In southern MR 1, the Communists continue improving roads and trails in the southern Quang Tin and northern Quang Ngai area. There are indications that the 2nd NVA Division is now being resupplied in preparation for tactical activity directed against the seaport of Sa Huynh in southern Quang Ngai Province. Reportedly, additional tanks have recently been brought into the area for use in the attack.



18. In southern South Vietnam the Communists are sustaining a large flow of supplies across the southern Cambodian border and through the northern provinces of MR 3. South Vietnamese aerial observers note, on a daily basis, truck convoys of three to seven trucks each and large groups of motoreyeles and bicycles engaged in resupply activities in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, and Binh Duong Provinces. More than 200 newly constructed buildings and storage bunkers were detected in Tay Ninh and Binh Duong along the Saigon River infiltration corridor, and in northwestern Tay Ninh an additional 20 new structures were observed.

19. Important new roadbuilding has also been reported in northern Tay Ninh Province. In mid-March the Communists used bulldozers and a large labor force to add 15 more miles to a new road leading southward from Route 7 near Mimot, Cambodia. The new road now links Route 7 with Route 13 in Tay Ninh, eventually providing a corridor eastward into Communist-held parts of Binh Long and Binh Duong Provinces. Six tanks and three antiaircraft artillery (AAA) guns were recently reported moving along the corridor.

20. COSVN rear services personnel in MR 3 are reported to have completed preparations to purchase large quantities of food, medicine, and other goods in Saigon markets to be delivered to the Communists by legally licensed trucking firms. Allegedly, supplies acquired in this manner will be distributed both to troops and to residents of Communist-controlled areas in MR 3.

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21. In the lower Delta, [redacted] during March the Viet Cong in An Xuyen Province twice were able to infiltrate supplies by sea. Cargo received reportedly included antiaircraft machineguns, recoilless rifles, B-40 rockets, medicine, and various types of ammunition. The supplies were probably shipped from Cambodia, where the Communists now control a significant part of the southern coastline.

Recent Manpower Developments

Personnel Infiltration

22. During the reporting period, three special-purpose infiltration groups with at least 125 infiltrators were initially detected in North Vietnam while 13 additional special-purpose groups (with an aggregate strength of about 300) were reported for the first time in the Laotian Panhandle. The location of these 13 groups as of mid-April suggests that they probably departed from North Vietnam about a month ago. In addition, one regular infiltration group -- 1003 -- was initially detected on 11 April in

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

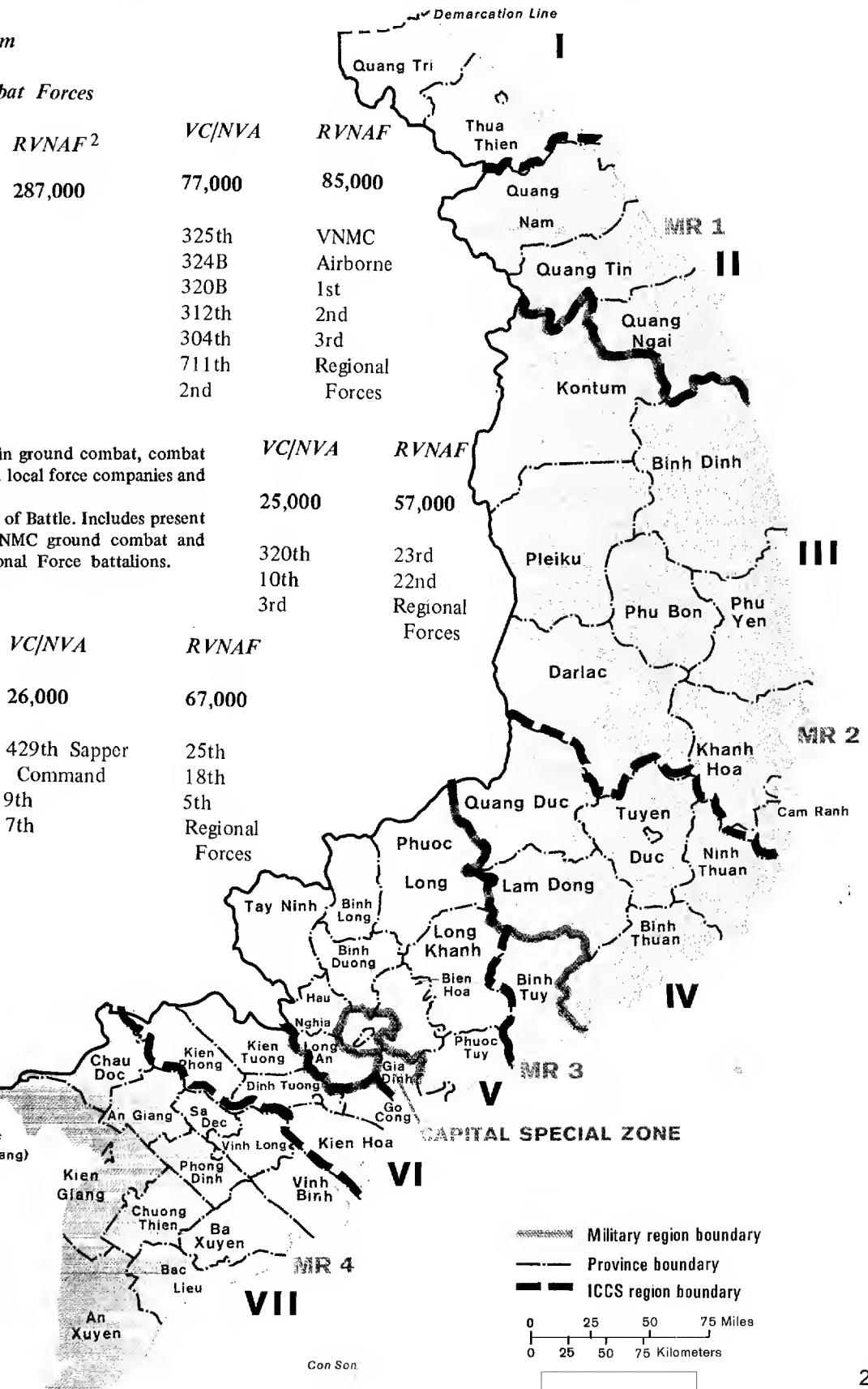
<i>VC/NVA</i> ¹	<i>RVNNAF</i> ²	<i>VC/NVA</i>
154,000	287,000	77,000

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.
 2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions.

<i>VC/NVA</i>	<i>RVNAR</i>
25,000	57,000
320th	23rd
10th	22nd
3rd	Regional Forces

<i>VC/NVA</i>	<i>RVNAF</i>
26,000	67,000
429th Sapper Command	25th 18th
9th	5th
7th	Regional

<i>VC/NVA</i>	<i>RVN AF</i>
26,000	78,000
.5th	21st
1st	9th
	7th
	44th Special
	Tactical Zone
	Regional Forces



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northeastern Cambodia. This group had already been gap-filled and thus does not increase our previously reported estimate of total infiltration starts since 1 September or 28 January.

23. Table 1 shows that the number of infiltration starts from 1 September 1972 to 22 April 1973 is significantly less than during the same period in the 1971/72 dry season. Table 2 shows estimated starts of regular and special-purpose infiltration groups, by week, since 1 January, for the current dry season. The latter estimate should be regarded as soft because precise data concerning the dates of departure of many of the groups are unavailable.

Table 1
Infiltration Starts, by Season

Destination	1 Sep 71 - 22 Apr 72	1 Sep 72 - 22 Apr 73
Total	115,000	86,500
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	17,000	26,000
MR 5	16,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,500
Southern Laos/MR 559	14,000	11,000

Table 2
**Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973**

	Total ¹	Special- Purpose ²
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250
12-18	2,000	850
19-25	500	500
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300

Table 2

**Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973
(Continued)**

	Total¹	Special-Purpose²
12-18	550	550
19-25	600	600
26-1 Apr	200	200
2-8	0	0
9-15	75	75
16-22	125	125

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001 through 7009. Assuming that these groups departed between 1 January and 10 March, some 4,500 combat troops would be spread over the departures estimated for those weeks.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

24. Since 28 January, about 15,000 personnel have entered the infiltration pipeline. Although most of these have been combat personnel traveling south in regular groups, a much higher-than-normal number of special-purpose groups has appeared in recent months. Since 28 January, about 150 special-purpose groups -- at least half of which probably were composed of civilian specialists -- have been detected at various points in the system. The detection of special-purpose groups in recent weeks, however, has declined somewhat, suggesting that the infiltration of civilian and military specialists may be abating.

25. The high rate of special-purpose infiltration apparently was undertaken by Hanoi primarily to bolster its political apparatus in South Vietnam. Nearly half of the detected groups were destined for the COSVN area, where the Communist political apparatus has suffered severe attrition during the past several years. Large numbers of administrative specialists also have been sent to the coastal provinces of GVN MR 2, suggesting that the Communists are also intent on rebuilding this former stronghold of the Viet Cong. Given the importance that Hanoi currently is attaching to the Communist political apparatus in South Vietnam, it is probable that some special-purpose infiltrators will continue to be sent south in the near future.

Unit Redeployments in South Vietnam

26. The 312th NVA Division has withdrawn or is in the process of withdrawing from South Vietnam. COMINT of 17 and 19 April 1973 has located the division's headquarters in the vicinity of Vinh, North Vietnam, and the division has recently terminated communications with the senior tactical authority in northern MR 1. The division's subordinate infantry regiments have not been detected in communications since late March 1973 or by radio direction finding since January 1973. Confirmed withdrawal of the 312th will mean that the MR 1 VC/NVA combat order of battle will be reduced from the current total of 77,000 to some 71,000 troops. There is no additional information on the other NVA division -- the 304th -- which was reported last week as possibly withdrawing from GVN MR 1.

27. In southern South Vietnam, relocations by elements of up to three North Vietnamese divisions -- constituting the first major redeployments there since the cease-fire -- have substantially increased the concentration of Communist units in the northern Delta/Cambodia border area. Recent COMINT has placed the Headquarters, NVA 1st Division, and its subordinate 52nd Regiment, in Cambodia adjacent to Chau Doc Province where two other 1st Division regiments have been operating for some time. To the east, collateral reporting indicates that the 272nd Regiment of the 9th NVA Division probably has moved from Binh Long Province in MR 3 into the South Vietnam/Cambodia border area adjacent to Kien Phong Province. Moreover, preliminary analysis of COMINT suggests that the Headquarters, 5th NVA Division, has moved into the border area of Kien Tuong Province from its normal area of operations in Dinh Tuong Province.

28. The recent shifts bring the total enemy force structure in the northern Delta/Cambodia border area to two division headquarters and six regiments with a complement of about 6,000 men. The reasons for these recent unit movements are not yet clear, but the current concentration greatly enhances the enemy's offensive capability in the area. On the other hand, the shifts could signal a period of rest and refitting or a basic alteration in the command and control structure.

29. In air defense developments, [] photography revealed that three North Vietnamese SA-2 sites near Khe Sanh in Quang Tri Province were occupied. A preliminary field report received last week which suggested that the North Vietnamese had installed "dummy" launchers and missiles at one of the SA-2 sites has turned out to be incorrect.

Unit Redeployments in Cambodia

30. The North Vietnamese probably have deployed at least two AAA regiments into Cambodia since mid-February. One of these units -- the 210th AAA Regiment -- was noted on 15 February in the Binh Tram 37 area of Attopeu Province in the southern part of the Laotian Panhandle en route to Binh Tram 53, located near Kratie, Cambodia. Although the current location of the 210th is not known, it probably has crossed the Laos/Cambodia border, and may now be in the Binh Tram 53 area. In addition, the newly formed 46th AAA Regiment also has been committed to Cambodia. On 10 April, this unit -- formed from the headquarters of Binh Tram 46 and three AAA battalions -- was located near the Laos/Cambodia border about 30 miles southwest of Attopeu Town. Subsequently, on 19 April, elements of the 46th AAA Regiment were detected moving through the Stung Treng area of Cambodia. The deployment of these units into Cambodia represents the first known commitment of North Vietnamese AAA regiments to COSVN.

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